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ABSTRACT

This report provides an introduction to school leader training programs in Denmark. Folkeskoles (for students from 7-16 years of age) are under local government municipality administration. Municipalities can develop the curriculum within tightly drawn guidelines from the Ministry of Education. Further schooling is provided by gymnasia (for students from 16-19 years of age), which are under closer control of the central government. The head of the folkeskole (skoleinspector) has considerable flexibility within the national and municipal guidelines. There is usually no detailed job description for the skoleinspector, who is responsible for the administrative and pedagogic leadership of the school and reports to the municipal council. The post of skoleinspector is advertised nationally, and both the municipality and the parents' council can interview applicants. Applications are considered by the school commission, municipal council, and the Ministry, and appointments are made formally by the Monarch. A recently revised course of training for the skoleinspector is based on three areas of study: administration; educational issues; and leadership. The gymnasium head is head of the professional teaching team, administrator, and head of nonteaching staff and also has some budgetary responsibilities. The gymnasium head must usually have at least five years experience of helping with administrative tasks. Applications for the job go to the Ministry, and appointments are confirmed by the Minister and the Monarch. There is no special management training for gymnasium heads, but they benefit from programs and advice offered by the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies. (JD)

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SELECTION AND TRAINING OF FOLKESKOLE AND GYMNASIA HEADTEACHERS IN DENMARK

This report provides an introduction to school leader training programmes in Denmark. It is based on a short ten-day visit.

I have also included some comments on selection procedures.

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INTRODUCTION

Nine years of compulsory education is provided from age 7-16 in the primary and lower secondary school (the folkeskole) which also has a tenth year voluntary class. The schools are comprehensive and in principle the pupils are together in their original classes throughout their school attendance. Folkeskoles are under local government municipality administration. Municipalities can develop the curriculum within tightly drawn guidelines from the Ministry.

There are also private schools which receive 85 per cent financial support from the state.

After school-leaving age pupils go into employment, to vocational, technical or commercial training, or to grammar school (gymnasium) which is now catering for a rapidly expanding percentage of the 16-19 age range - 40 per cent in some cases.

Central government lays down curricular and staffing guidelines for folkeskoles, although the municipality recommends a general plan for schools in its area defining their size and curriculum. Central government has rather closer control of the gymnasia - there are 150 of the latter, 48 state, 81 county and municipal and 21 private.

The system teacher initial training and qualification, conditions of service, control and regulations for folkeskoles and gymnasia are separate. The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies (Denmark's Laerer Hijskole - DLH) offers further training for folkeskole teachers and college of education teachers. A wide range of courses is provided by a staff of 150 based in Copenhagen and other centres. Courses are provided in curricular subjects, pedagogy and psychology, and the patterns of courses range from long courses of more than 70 hours through a wide range of residential and non-residential courses and distance learning programmes. Each year some 9,000 teachers attend the long courses with a further 5,000-8,000 on short courses and 1,000 undertaking graduate studies - in all 35-40 per cent of all folkeskole teachers participate in the programme each year.

HEADSHIP IN THE DANISH FOLKESKOLE

The head of the folkeskole or skoleinspector has an increasingly complex task. Within the national and municipal guidelines he has a considerable flexibility and I saw a variety of management styles in operation. He is assisted by a vice-inspector whose task has traditionally been administrative. Increasingly vice-inspectors are sharing pedagogic leadership of the school and are thereby gaining excellent experience for future headship. Skole-inspectors I met spoke of the increasing pressures arising from social problems, a more critical attitude towards education from parents and school boards. There is usually no detailed job description for the skoleinspector who is responsible 'for the administrative and pedagogic leadership of the school' and responsible to the municipal council. The task of the head has been further complicated by legislation - not least the new employment legislation which regulates hours of work for all employees, including teachers. The head has to cope with an established pattern of democratic representatives - teachers' councils , class councils (pupils) and parents' councils.

HEADSHIP IN THE GYMNASIUM

The gymnasium head or rector has experienced great pressures also. He is also administrative and pedagogic head of the school. He has no formal job description but is head of the professional team, administrator, head of non-teaching staff and also has some budgetary responsibilities. Rules and standard procedures give the head less scope than in England, but he has to represent the school externally, eg on pupil admissions he liaises with the county authority. His 'democratic' leadership involves him in management tasks requiring a high order of personnel management.

The teachers' council has to be consulted on staff appointments. There is a rapid expansion of young people seeking places in the gymnasia and I visited more than one where over 40 per cent of the age group now enter to pursue the traditional academic 'grammar school' courses or the 2-year preparatory courses which also demand a high academic standard with a nucleus of common subjects and options.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

Skoleinspector and Vice-inspector in the Folkeskole

Most folkeskole teachers are trained at one of 30 colleges of education. They benefit from an extensive in-service training programme and can gain experience as (unpaid) subject chairman. The post of skoleinspector is advertised nationally. The municipality receives applications (in the case of special schools applications are received by the school board). The parents' council can interview applicants. Following that stage the municipal school commission will interview candidates together with parents and 2 teachers from the school. Some interviewing committees can be quite large. Three names go forward to the municipal council. Generally I had little opportunity to see any experimental schemes. Involvement of teachers and parents is recent and it is not many years since the applicant for a skoleinspector post made application to the King, was considered by the school commission, the municipal council, the Ministry, and then appointed formally by the monarch.

Vice-inspectors are formally chosen by the school board of the school concerned - in practice most heads will be able to choose their own vice-inspectors.

The Gymnasium

The teacher seeking appointment to headship must usually have at least 5 years' experience. In the gymnasium he can be paid extra to help with an admin task or he may gain a post as subject study director. It is useful for an applicant to have excelled as a subject inspector or to have served on a national committee. Other extra-curricular experience also counts.

Procedures for the appointment of rector are as follows:

The job is advertised in state and union journals.

In the case of a state gymnasium applications go to the Ministry with references from headteachers at the applicants' schools.

Applicants can ask to be interviewed.

The head of department at the Ministry recommends 1-3 names to the Minister and the Queen confirms the appointment.

For deputies (vice-rectors) the head of the applicant's school writes a recommendation and the selection is again done by the Ministry.

Criteria for selection of rectors have changed over the years. Management skills and experience are now important, although the formal requirement is that the applicant should have gymnasium teacher qualification - a university degree and a post-graduate pedagogical course with specialisms in two subjects.

In the case of the county gymnasia, the counties now decide for themselves. Until recently they put 3 names to the Ministry. This change has been received with disquiet by some teachers who may be doubtful of the capabilities of lay people in making key professional appointments.

TRAINING

Training for Leadership in the Gymnasium

There is no special management training for senior responsibility in the gymnasium. It must be noted, however, that management training is only just developing in the commercial field in Denmark. Gymnasium teachers have courses provided for them but they do not benefit from the wide-ranging programmes offered by the DLH.

Up to now rectors have been assisted by:

(a) Detailed and comprehensive Ministry regulations and advice on issues such as pedagogy, education law, examinations subjects, pupil admissions, pupil scholarships, internal organisation of the school, personnel problems, salaries, buildings, books and equipment;

(b) A regular advice service from the Ministry. One-hundred-and-fifty gymnasium heads in Denmark benefit from the opportunity to write or phone in for help and advice. Ministry advisers also give support, eg advice on approvals for pilot curriculum projects;

(c) An annual 3-day meeting of gymnasium heads takes place annually. This is programmed by the heads' association (a section of the gymnasium teachers (GL) union) and the Ministry.

(d) Counties are also now building up their own advisory services and arrange meetings of heads.

In March 1980 a new 1-week 'admin' course for rectors was launched. Sixty-seven applications were received for 25 places. The course was held at the Civil Service Training Centre. The programme was

planned by a committee of rectors and Ministry representatives and concentrated on various 'admin' problems - annual return (G Sikema), pupil rights, industrial relations, problems of the Higher Preparatory examination (HF) courses and a new computer system to be introduced in 1981.

In Denmark there seems little prospect of the development of joint training for heads of gymnasia and folkeskoles because of the basic organisation and traditions of the education service.

Training for Leadership in the Folkeskole

For some years residential courses for more experienced heads have been arranged by the Danish Headteachers' Association (Danmarks Skolelederforening).

The complete system of courses has recently been revised taking into consideration a new 'Basic Course for School-leaders'. In 1973 a basic course lasting 2 weeks was established. One week concentrating on administrative problems was organised at the 'Local Government Training Centre in Denmark' located in Grenaa (Kommunale Højskole). The second week was run by the Danmarks Laererhøjskole (DLH) dealing with the pedagogic aspects of the head's task. In recent years the DLH has faced an increasing gulf between its financial means, offered by the Ministry of Finance, and the demands of the folkeskole teachers for new courses. In the same period there was also a pressure from the heads and from municipalities to develop a 'less academic and complex' course for school-leaders. As a result, it was decided to launch a revised basic course in the autumn 1980 based on the Kommunale Højskole in Denmark.

While the new course is welcomed by the Ministry, it will, however, receive no formal recognition. The National Association of Local Authorities has in a circular letter recommended the course to all local authorities. It must be noted, that all teachers, including leaders, in the folkeskole are appointed by the municipality. This new course has been planned by a development board which included in membership representatives of the teachers' association, the head-teachers' association (DS), the school directors' association, the National Association of Local Authorities, the DLH, the Ministry of Education and Kommunale Højskole.

These in turn gave the task of organising the course to a working party of 4 people. Those coming together to plan the new course had varying approaches to the role of the school leader and the new programme took some time to devise. The course will be run by a member of staff at the Danmarks Kommunale Højskole, who has an interesting background - graduate in political science, formerly a teacher training college lecturer and member of teaching staff in folk high school.

There is no permanent teaching staff employed by the Kommunale Højskole. The 'course tutors' are mainly drawn from officials directly related to the folkeskole, ie teaching and/or administration from the level of the school to the level of the Ministry. For special reasons experts may be invited from other areas, as for instance, two psychologists employed by the Army Centre for Leadership.

The Kommunale Højskole offers courses to all sectors and levels within the sphere of local government. Especially it should be mentioned that courses also are offered to elected board members. From all sectors there have in recent years been quite a pressure for special courses for leaders. But no other sector or level has up till now been offered a course as long as the 21 days, which the Basic Course includes. The Kommunale Højskole is also a centre for various regional activities. Internationally it is a member of the Study Group of European Public Service Training Agencies.

The new course is on offer to recently appointed heads but leads on to later phases of training for more experienced heads. The basic 21-day course is devided into 4 residential 'blocks'. Vice-inspectors are able to enrol and in this way the training provides some preparatory training for potential heads. In case of over-subscription, which is quite likely, priority will be given to school-leaders with less than 2 years and more than six months appointment in the leading position. All applications are make through the municipality, which is covering the course fee. The four parts or 'blocks' cannot be separated. As there is a strong tradition of in-service training for the Danish folkeskole, it is generally expected that leaders will be supported by their municipality. On the other hand, the general financial strain

in the Danish public sector may possibly manifest itself in this connection. Because of the length of the course, the costs involved may be considered too high.

The whole course is based on three areas of study - administration, educational issues and leadership. The aim is to integrate these three major themes throughout the course. The general structure of the first two Basic Courses in 1980/81 is as follows:

Part I: 3 days

Introductory session. Main topics: lessons and training concerning the special duty of the leader for the 'school calendar' and problems concerning filing and records.

Part II: 6 days

Introduction to theories concerning organisation, management, leadership and decision making. The municipality and its role. Co-operation between the school and school management and board. Budgeting, accounts and purchasing. Codes of administration, school laws and other relevant laws.

Part III: 6 days

Co-operation between the social service system and the schools. Remedial education - integration. 4 days of this period is 'a course in the course': introduction to skills of working with groups and individuals in groups. Topics such as norms, roles, attitudes, motivation and communication are treated within the framework of management and co-operation.

Part IV: 6 days

Educational experiments and developments. The school-leader as head of personnel, ie teachers and others. Evalualuation and testing arrangements. Alternative schooling. Co-operation between pupils, teachers and parents. Advice and guidance to pupils. Experiments with school syllabus and timetabling. Adjustment to change.

Only 80 heads are expected to attend the Basic Course a year. As there are 3000 folkeskoleleaders in Denmark there will be a continuing need for courses for more experienced heads. Such

courses - as mentioned above - are offered within the framework of the headteachers' association. These courses have been overhauled so as to serve as a follow up to the above-mentioned Basic Course. . This course has no formal link with the courses organised by the Headteachers Association. There is some indirect co-ordination however, and these further courses are seen by the Headteachers' Association as a follow-up providing parts V to VII of the training.

Parts V, VI and VII of the training are organised by the Headteachers' Association and are based upon current problems which the participants put forward before the start of the course. The aim is to provide skills for the head as leader of a problem-solving group.

Part V deals with:

(a) The planning, arrangement and control of meetings - individual and group practice is provided.

(b) The participants learn by experience to plan, arrange and accomplish problem-solving tasks in groups of up to 12 people. They practise the leadership role of achieving effective decisions in group exercises. During this course school problems of common interest are used as 'raw material', ie case studies and examples of 'real' problems are used.

Part VI trains the head to exercise his role in major conference meetings of up to 144 people. The skills of utilising individual talents and obtaining effective decisions are studied and practised.

Part VII concentrates on organisation in the school and puts emphasis on the construction of and use of examinations - 'feedback' in an organisation.

Evaluation of the course will be by means of informal discussions with participants. The course organiser has yet to see what the response will be, but he has identified the following problems:

(a) There is little knowledge as yet of what individual 'leadership' is;

(b) There is a need to consider the organisation in total, ie the head's training has to be linked to the development of the whole staff of a school;

(c) There is a shortage of competent trainers who have knowledge and practical ability;

(d) There is a need to bridge the gap between managers in various sectors, eg the need to strengthen education and social work liaison;

(e) There is a problem of follow-up at local level

(f) The wide range of experience of participants may present problems. How will heads with long experience and no formal training work in with young university graduates with limited experience?

Training Provided within DLH by Professor Skjum-Nielsen

Whilst the DLH was running its traditional courses for heads on pedagogic issues, another course was being developed within the DLH by Professor Skjum Nielsen, Professor of Social Psychology. For ten years he has been working in the field of organisational development in some 120 schools. For five years or so he has run courses for ordinary teachers on 'social psychology as a frame of reference for normal teaching'.

The DLH course brochures now include his course on 'educational administration and management within educational systems'. The course runs over several months with non-residential sessions and 3 days in residence. I visited Vordingborg in South Sjellard and learnt something of the course for school leaders held in that area during 1979/80 where 60 people have taken part in two parallel courses. The course deals with the skills of leadership and has an organisation development approach. Two, three or four people are recruited from each folkeskole and schools participating are all from the same area. A typical recruitment is to facilitate a 'bridgehead' into the system. Each group of participants will be trained to influence and develop the school system, ie teachers, pupils, school board and the local administration.

As an introduction to the course, participants prepare a topic for change in their school. They are asked to tackle a small and manageable change. Over a period of 6 weeks project groups of 2-4 people working in the same school, or two schools in the same area, work on implementation of a small change and report on its reception in the school. While this is taking place the group are attending regular weekly non-residential sessions. Only then can they move on to plan a 'more definite intervention'. In the words of the course organiser 'you only have one chance at effecting a change in a school'. At this stage of the course a residential session is held. Participants compare their further training needs with the 'offered' syllabus and prepare for a more major development in the school.

Written material is provided for their use with colleagues and for a further 2 months they prepare in project groups by identifying a change and the key persons affected by it. The thesis is that 'you can only discover how a system works when you try to change it'. The project groups then attempt their 'more definite intervention' and record and evaluate what happened before, during and after the exercise. In one school the project group were concerned to improve the way in which decisions were made and actioned in their school. They began by consulting colleagues in the school, who confirmed that this was a major problem. As a result procedures were changed and more teachers were given a positive role in decision-making. Here a word of caution is necessary. The course leader emphasises that participants must not ask a manipulator - colleagues in the school may not respond immediately, and in some cases a project group may only hope for results at a later stage. In 1980/81 the course for school leader development is to be offered to 130 people in five centres - two in Southern Sjelland, one in Hillerød and two in Copenhagen.

The same syllabus is on offer in a general course open to skole-inspectors, vice-inspectors, chairman of teachers' boards, psychologists, consultants (teachers/advisers) and teachers 'who are getting or will get leadership functions in the schools'. It is considered that there is value in everyone getting some pre-training together for school development.

School-based leadership courses have also been organised. One school with a new head and deputy had a course provided for 43 teachers (95% of the staff) who spent 4 days in residence (2 of them school in-service training days) and some non-residential sessions together.

A General Observation on Leadership Training Approaches

It is interesting to contrast the approach of major training initiatives. One at DKH is drawing together a homogeneous group of skoleinspectors; the other at Vordingborg is recruiting beyond the formal school leadership to draw on a heterogenous group of heads and potential heads. Both courses are contributing to a substantial demand for leadership training.

The purpose of both courses is to improve job performance and also to create real improvements in the school. With these aims in mind it is clear that the course at the DKH in Grenaa will encounter substantial difficulties unless adequate 'follow-up' and development can be secured at municipal and school level. The DKH has led the field in providing 'distance learning' materials and 'do-it-yourself' packs for local authority administrators, and it may be that suitable follow-up activities at local level may emerge. This evaluation is made, however, before the first course has been completed and these problems are already clearly identified by the course organisers as priorities for further action.

Whilst I was in Denmark I saw other training initiatives which are taking place at municipality or school level. Near Copenhagen the Brøndy Municipality arranges regular meetings with the eleven folkeskole heads to discuss common problems, and this kind of regular consultation is widespread in Denmark. It does not, however, always meet the need of a head who wishes to air problems in a more neutral training ground. Several Danish schools are developing their own in-service training and I saw an outstanding example of this at Rosenvangskolen, Aarhus where a residential course involving all the teachers is held each year (the teachers pay to attend this course!). The school has developed an effective structure and organisation for reviewing, developing and evaluating its curriculum and getting 'feedback'

on its performance from pupils and parents.

There is no doubt that school-leader training in Denmark's folkeskoles has been greatly assisted by the well-established tradition of in-service training.

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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Landemaerket 10
DK 1119 KØBENHAVN K

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Frederiksholms kanal 21
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More Reading!

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